

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-10

EB-08 NRC-07 OES-07 FEAE-00 ERDA-07 /118 W

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O P 231145Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7547

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

UNCLAS LONDON 14029

LAGOS FOR MOOSE AND PETTERSON

E. O. 11652:NA

TAGS: MNUC, SF, UK, PARM

SUBJECT: BRITISH PRESS ON ANGLO-FRENCH DEMARCHES ON
SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR ISSUE

1. LONDON DAILY PRESS ON AUGUST 23 GIVES PROMINENT
PLAY TO BRITISH AND FRENCH REPRESENTATIONS TO SOUTH
AFRICA ON ALLEGED SOUTH AFRICAN PREPARATIONS FOR A
NUCLEAR EXPLOSION. MOST DETAILED ACCOUNT OF BRITISH
DEMARCHE APPEARS AS LEAD STORY BY VINCENT RYDER IN
"THE DAILY TELEGRAPH." FULL TEXT FOLLOWS.

2. BEGIN TEXT: IN A CLEAR HINT THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS
SUSPECTED OF PLANNING A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION THE FOREIGN
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OFFICE SAID YESTERDAY THAT A WEAPON TEST "WOULD BE AN
EXTREMELY GRAVE STATE OF AFFAIRS, WHICH THE BRITISH
GOVERNMENT WOULD STRONGLY CONDEMN."

SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTERS HAVE INSISTED THAT THEIR
NUCLEAR RESEARCH IS INTENDED ONLY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES.
DESPITE THE CLAIMS, BRITAIN IS GIVING WARNINGS, PUBLICLY
AND PRIVATELY, OF THE GRAVE REPERCUSSIONS OF ANY

NUCLEAR EXPLOSION.

IT IS EVIDENT THAT THERE ARE SUSPICIONS THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS PLANNING A "PEACEFUL" NUCLEAR DETONATION. THE TECHNICAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN A NUCLEAR EXCAVATION DEVICE AND A CRUDE WEAPON IS A FINE ONE.

THE MUCH GREATER DISTINCTION BETWEEN A CRUDE EXPLOSIVE AND A PRACTICAL WEAPON WITH ITS DELIVERY SYSTEM WOULD BE LOST IN THE POLITICAL UPROAR IN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE. THERE WILL BE A FORETASTE AT THIS WEEK'S UNITED NATIONS ANTI-APARTHEID CONFERENCE IN LAGOS.

PRESIDENT BREZHNEV RAISED THE ALARM TEN DAYS AGO IN PERSONAL MESSAGES TO MR. CALLAGHAN AND OTHER WESTERN LEADERS. THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY, SENT AT THE WEEKEND, IS BELIEVED TO BE ON THE LINES OF YESTERDAY'S FOREIGN OFFICE STATEMENT.

THIS SAID: "IF IT WERE EVIDENT THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS ARE COMPLETING WORK ON THE PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND ARE PREPARING FOR A TEST IT WOULD BE AN EXTREMELY GRAVE STATE OF AFFAIRS WHICH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD STRONGLY CONDEMN.

"LIKE MANY OTHER GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, IT IS OUR POLICY TO GUARD AGAINST ANY NON-NUCLEAR STATE ACQUIRING A NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE CAPABILITY."

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAS THE EXPERTIS TO MAKE NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND PROBABLY HAS THE RAW UNCLASSIFIED

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MATERIAL FROM HER NUCLEAR RESEARCH.

MR. BREZHNEV GAVE NO HINT IN HIS MESSAGE WHY HE BELIEVES A TEST IS BEING PLANNED, REFERRING ONLY TO "AVAILABLE INFORMATION." IF HE HAS ANY HARD EVIDENCE IT COULD BE FROM SPY SATELLITES OR MORE CONVENTIONAL INTELLIGENCE WORK. END TEXT.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
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